

VZCZCXRO4742  
PP RUEHROV  
DE RUEHAM #3079/01 3111416  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 061416Z NOV 08  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3801  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 003079

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/PPD, IIP/GNEA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [JO](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: Jordan Media Reaction to Obama Election

¶1. Summary: nearly all columnists and editors writing in the Jordanian press today welcomed the election of Senator Obama as the next U.S. President, with the dominant theme being that he would bring very positive change to an America allegedly tarnished by the bush presidency. Following are excerpts from the main daily newspapers.

¶2. "The End of the Ugly American!": Columnist Osama Al-Sharif in today's edition of the government-aligned, pro-Palestinian Arabic daily Ad-Dustour opines: "We now witness a great transition in the structure of the superpower of the world. Although it is naive to pin great hopes on President Obama vis-à-vis our causes, the fact is that the era of 'the ugly American' is gone and the world has breathed a sigh of relief, though president Bush's legacy will haunt us for years to come."

"Jordanian-U.S. Relations in Obama's Era": Managing Editor Fahed Khitan in today's edition of Al-Arab Al-Yawm notes that the Jordanian street in its entire political spectrum seems comfortable with Barack Obama's win in the U.S. presidential elections. He observes: "In the long run, Obama's win will contribute to improving the image of America, which, in the eyes of the peoples of the entire world, has been viewed as an evil despotic country in the hands of Bush and his gang of neo-conservatives." Khitan highlights the strong relations that Jordan enjoys with the United States, saying: "What is so important for Jordan in the first place is the stance of the new American administration towards the peace process, the rights of the Palestinian people as well as the interests of the Jordanian state in the final status solution." Taking note of what U.S. assistance to Jordan will be like in Obama's era, Khitan says: "Jordan, which managed to obtain assistance from (Bush's) conservative administration and to double that assistance even, should face no difficulties from a (new) administration that leans towards building more balanced relations with its world allies." He concludes: "Change is the slogan that achieved Obama's win amidst a state of cautious optimism. The peoples of the region are awaiting the translation of this slogan into a new U.S. policy towards the Arab world."

"Historic Elections": Today's main editorial in the government-aligned, pro-Palestinian Arabic daily Ad-Dustour notes: "The results of the U.S. elections...were historic as they constitute a decisive turning point in American history with the win of the first American of African origins and a turnout which exceeded all expectations in favor of change and restoring America's image, so distorted by the Bush era."

"Negatives That Created A President Whose Positives We Await": Columnist Rakan Al-Majali, normally a harsh critic of the U.S., in today's edition of Ad-Dustour makes the point that Obama owes his win in the U.S. elections to President Bush in the wake of its political "recklessness" that had reached the point of "madness, total failure and collapse." Al-Majali concludes: "Barack Obama has reached the White House but has to deal with the negatives -- tragedies and crimes committed by his predecessor's administration. This whole trail of negatives is what brought Obama to the presidency. But from this day on, people will hope for positives that should not be confined to tackling those negatives but to

drawing a new image for America and the world."

"The American Electoral Decisiveness": Columnist Ali Safadi in today's edition of Ad-Dustour discusses factors that led to Obama's win in the U.S. presidential elections. He concludes: "What is important is that the era of Bush, who has launched a war against Iraq and Afghanistan, is gone and that the portfolio of the one who made promises about a solution without achieving anything has been closed. It is hoped that Obama's era will be marked by an actual positive change, not just on the domestic level but on the foreign policy level as well."

"Change is Coming. Will Any of Its Winds Blow at Us?": Columnist Oraib Rintawi in today's Ad-Dustour opines, "What is most important to us is that we be included in the change that the president-elect is talking about." Rintawi concludes: "We want a share of this 'change', which is part of our national and Pan-Arab perspective that we will present in our dialogue with the new U.S. administration."

"America Has Changed. Will the Arabs Change?": Chief editor Taher Odwan in today's edition of the independent, opposition Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm observes, "The Americans have voted in favor of change. Meanwhile the world breathed a sigh of relief because the election of Obama puts an end to the era of neo-conservatives led by George Bush, which has flooded the world with wars, fear and crises and spread enmity and hatred between peoples. A black president in the White House. Indeed, America's face has never been as snow-white as it was in the moments and hours that followed the triumph of democracy and the declaration of Barak Obama's victory." Discussing how the Arabs will respond to the winds of change, Odwan

AMMAN 00003079 002 OF 002

says: "Supposedly, the policy of change that Obama will lead should prompt Arab governments to change their approach and stances towards the Palestinian cause. It should also prompt them to transition from a policy of appeasement of America and Europe to resolve this cause to a policy of forcefully championing Arab rights and defending the interests of the nation before America and the international community..."

"Obama's win ... and the Misery of Arab diplomacy!": Political Advisor for the Chief Editor of the leading, government-owned Arabic daily Al-Rai, Mohammed Kharroub, believes that Obama's win will "accumulate crises for Arab diplomacy." He wrote: "...we should not forget his middle name from now on because several circles will insist on using it for different goals, particularly Islamic and Zionists ones...it is not a secret that several Arab capitals did not wish him to reach the White House for different reasons, perhaps foremost, he would be serious and committed to spreading democracy and respect for human rights and disseminating public freedoms (do not forget promotion of American values and culture) more than his Republican predecessor."

"It is America's Greatness": former Information Minister Saleh Qallab in Al-Rai wrote that Barak Obama's historic landslide victory in the US elections "is a victory for the United States as a system, constitution, and institutions and is a victory for the people of America" who have gathered from "black, white and yellow" origins, in this spot of the planet and "established such a state, which both contemporary and ancient history have not witnessed." The U.S. "gave the world a distinguished democratic experience that opened the door of the White House for an ambitious young man whose father never dreamed of getting out of his Kenyan African village."

"US Regains Its Myth, What Else?" Columnist Jamil Nimri in today's edition of the independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad said "America regains its myth, which has been sinking in the mud; it regains its myth as a democratic country and the land of opportunities." Electing Obama open doors on other historical perceptions such as "closing a complete and finale statement of account with the historical heritage of slavery and racism...." Nimri said "Martin Luther King's dream literally became true."

"Republicans are enemies to their friends": Columnist Sameh Ma'aita in the independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad wrote that "The US needs to change the faces of its leaders" adding that "who is better than a Black candidate from African origins."

Beecroft